

In 2014 16th Tallinn Print Triennial took place, in 2013 11th Baltic States Biennial of Graphic Arts took place in Kaliningrad. So far the first Kaunas International Printmaking Biennial "Culture Line" has started in Lithuania this year, though it had a good start. From the last brightest event, dedicated to graphic arts, called "Body. Lithuanians' graphics 1980-2013" two years has already passed. So, biennial in Kaunas happens in the right place at the right time. Besides, in a perspective of keeping traditions, Kaunas has a great opportunity to create an image of a city with high quality exhibitions.

A short introduction to the biennial: mostly artists from Lithuania, Poland and Latvia are on display, in addition, a few from Estonia, Ukraine and Belarus are exhibited, too. Participants are well-known middle age artists with a few younger exceptions. So, we see creators who have individual, recognizable touch, though with no surprises but with sufficient quality and, talking about foreigners, who probably haven't been shown to the Lithuanian public yet.

According to the biennial press-release, all participants are trying to "reveal stories of the modern world or values" using classical printmaking techniques. In my opinion, this affirmation suits best the Polish artists' oeuvres. Instead of aiming for a cheap external effects, they are drily creating monochromatic works and are conveying deep thoughts. Modern world stories unfold unawares in Adnrezej Węclawsky's graphics. The artist confronts archaic signs, which resemble the runes and symbolises the past, with digital view in which they are also encoded. Krzysztof Tomalsky's series "Alternative cosmogony" are interesting as well, where the framework of a house, human's ribbing, a hand and planets in a neat line are depicted together and associatively connect in the spectator's mind.

The colourful and illustrative Latvian works are completely different. For instance, sensitive like painting Lasma's Pujate's lithographies. However, Latvian exposition is quite careless, often solves only decorative problems, like Paulis Liepa or Tatjana Krivenkova do, playing with colours and shapes. An exception is Liena Bondare, who think conceptually, her works will be discussed later.

Probably most difficult to appreciate are Lithuanians works, which do not make a stylistic united whole. Matas Dūda's and Rimvydas Kepežinska's works are dark, it seems that they try to uncurtain the transcendence. Both of them are different as night and day from vivid and straightforward Kristina Norvilaitė's compositions or sarcastic Edmundas Saladžius's scenes. Lithuania's young gene-

ration representatives Greta Grendaitė's and Gabija Vidrinskaitė's works successfully merge with common showpieces of biennial. So, I would describe Lithuanian exposition as an attempt to show a variety of our printmaking art and unwillingness to form its artificial image.

Therefore only prize given artists Peeter Allik, Kęstutis Vasiliūnas and Liena Bondare are left to describe.

Personally I was surprised about the 1st prize, which was given to Estonian artist Peeter Allik, who exhibited a cycle of 13 works in biennial. The series include a few still-lives and works, where a kid's shot through the eye, the self-portrait, a rabbit in the hat, wolf gang, etc., are depicted. The works cannot be blamed for a technical fulfilment but in these surreal manner accomplished linocuts something more than a high skills can be hardly seen. Neither a special narrative, nor an unexpected composition (the central composition dominates), nor a figurative sense exists in these prints. In a few works some humble directly conveyed ideas can be found, such as naked men and women holding a sign "Sex", which can be understood as a social critic. However, expectations, related with first place, remain unjustified.

2nd prize winner Kęstutis Vasiliūnas deserves more attention. He contemporarily interprets traditional Christian narratives: Prophet Daniel's throw to the den of lions, Jesus Christ passion and crucifixion. Vasiliūnas supplements Christian iconography with pop art stylistics: for a few times he repeats composition or its elements in a different colours, adds a logo of "Coca-cola". The style of the works look like Banksy's or other street artists, who make images using stencil, so religious motifs become filled with unusual context, which encourage to rethink them.

3rd prize was given to Latvian Liena Bondare. Her notes and pictures, created with a chalk on the green board, are directed link to Joseph Beuys's oeuvre, also, they are a stricter and structuralised interpretation of it. Bondare's works have been already shown in her personal exhibition in 2011 in Riga but it perfectly suits Kaunas Biennial. The contemplation of the postmodern art connects with the development of graphic arts and make sense with a title "Cultural line". I assume that the prize given to Liena Bondare shows the organizers' values: although the exhibition was held in order to reveal the significance of classical printmaking techniques, they remain open to an alternative artistic expression.

Many other works are worthy seeing in Kaunas International Biennial of Printmaking. It is better to experience it by one's own.